

REGIONAL STREET AND TRAIL DESIGN GUIDELINES

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ISSUE STATEMENT

The Metro Council supports developing a regional transportation system which implements the land use of the 2040 Growth Concept and achieves the region's desired outcomes. Metro is in the final stages of updating the region's street and trail design guidelines to support Council's work connecting land use and transportation through better design. The guidelines provide a performance-based framework and recommend best practices in design to achieve desired outcomes. Performance-based design can be referred to by other names, including practical design, practical solutions, performance-based practical design and so on. For the purposes of this presentation to Council, the term "performance-based design" will be used.

As the guidelines near completion, staff seeks Council direction to proceed with the final draft. Staff seeks Council affirmation that the overall direction of the guidelines fulfills the Council's expectations for application to future transportation projects and future transportation funding opportunities.

ACTION REQUESTED

- Council's direction to proceed with the final draft of the street and trail design guidelines in preparation for the April 22 Policymaker's Forum on Transportation Design for Community Outcomes.
- Council direction on how the design elements, best practices and performance-based decision-making framework in the guidelines are applied regarding regionally funded projects

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

Metro Council has provided leadership on street design as a critical part of linking land use and transportation, and that street design:

- Be sustainable, context sensitive and performance-based
- Include ongoing and meaningful public engagement, especially for historically underserved communities
- Be fiscally responsible and employ practical solutions
- Use data, including predictive safety models, to inform design decisions
- Implement the 2040 Growth Concept and foster livable communities throughout the region
- Encourage walking, bicycling and the use of transit
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions

- Help achieve regional outcomes including safety (Vision Zero), social and racial equity, increased transportation options, efficient and reliable travel for all modes, healthy people and environment, security and resiliency, sustainable economic prosperity and fiscal stewardship
- Avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts on the natural environment

POLICY QUESTION(S)

- Are there additional policy outcomes or clarifications to those already identified, that the Council wish staff to reflect in the regional transportation design guidelines?
- Does the Council have further direction on the approach or content of the design guidelines?
- Is there additional direction the Council wants to provide in regards to applying regional street and trail design guidelines to future transportation funding?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Staff will provide an overview of the overall approach and content of the guidelines. The Metro Council may choose to affirm the overall approach as presented, or provide additional direction to be reflected in the final design guidelines. In addition to guidance provided at the January 24 and 31 work sessions, Council may choose to provide additional direction on how to apply regional street design guidance to future transportation funding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends to proceed with finalizing the design guidelines prior to the April 22 Policymaker's Forum on Transportation Design for Community Outcomes.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

More than ever it is critical that transportation projects are designed and delivered to be cost effective and achieve regional outcomes. A growing population and economy is straining the transportation system while not all communities have the same level of safe access to transportation options, and negative impacts of transportation have not been eliminated. Transportation projects must deliver more with less funding. Therefore, it is essential that the design process for regional transportation projects uses a decision-making framework and design approach that is data-driven, performance driven, flexible and employs practical solutions.

The Metro Council provided policy direction at its January 24 and 31, 2019 work sessions that projects funded with regional investments must meet regional design guidelines and be designed using Performance Based Practical Design principles.

Metro Council President Lynn Peterson is hosting a policymaker's forum on transportation design on April 22. The purpose of the event is to provide an opportunity for local, regional and state policymakers' to discuss and enhance their understanding of the performance-based design guidelines and support shared understanding of terms and concepts. Councilors are invited to participate and share their perspectives.

The updated regional street and trail design guidance includes a performance-based design decision-making framework (see slides 9 and 10 in Attachment 1). The framework is a series of steps that helps ensure that transportation projects meet their stated needs and objectives and achieve system wide outcomes while employing tools such as practical and tactical design. A series of check-points and documenting design decisions is used to determine that projects will achieve intended outcomes, including racial and social equity, safety and climate action goals. The performance-based framework asserts a transparent decision-making process that meaningfully engages communities, especially those that have been historically underserved and disproportionately impacted.

A technical work group composed of city, county and agency engineering and planning staff, community members and transportation advocates has been meeting since 2017 providing technical guidance the guidelines (see slide 4 in Attachment 1). Additionally, public comments on policies related to street and trail design were provided during the updated of the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan. A majority of the comments focused on the need for multimodal safety and additional policies for green infrastructure.

Design was identified as one of eight key policies for the update of the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan. The Regional Transportation Plan includes street and trail design policy, including Regional Street Design Classifications which are applied to roadways with the throughway or arterial functional classification. Regional Design Classifications provide general guidance on number of lanes, modal priorities and street functions. The Regional Transportation Functional Plan states that local transportation system plans must allow for regional street design guidelines. Projects funded with regional flexible funds must be consistent with regional transportation design guidelines, but are currently not required to use a performance-based decision-making process.

Staff will provide an update with Council's direction to the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) on March 21. The April 22 forum will provide additional opportunities for policymaker's to provide input on the design approach and decision-making framework.

BACKGROUND

Since 1996, Metro has provided policies and tools to link transportation design and function to land use as a means to achieving the vision laid out in the 2040 Growth Concept and advancing Metro's core mission to preserve and enhance the quality of life and the environment for today and future generations. Metro developed a suite of handbooks - Creating Livable Streets, Green Streets, Trees for Green Streets, Wildlife Crossings and Green Trails - to support design to link land use and transportation.

Metro received a regional flexible fund grant to update the design guidelines. The project has been underway, though not continuously, since 2016 (see slide 3 in Attachment 1). A regional technical work group is providing review input throughout the process and periodic updates are provided to the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) and the Metropolitan Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC). The project was coordinated

with the update of the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan and provided minor policy updates. The guidelines will be completed in late summer 2019 and provided on an updated webpage with case studies linked to a map of the region, a photo library, schematics and street visualizations.

ATTACHMENTS

- Is legislation required for Council action? No
- What other materials are you presenting today?
 - Attachment 1: Presentation on regional street and trail design guidelines
 - Attachment 2: Annotated Outline for Designing Livable Streets and Trails